

Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing – February 21, 2017
H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Donald Maleto Executive Director
Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

The Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is comprised of the sixteen Boys & Girls Clubs in Connecticut who combine to serve over 50,000 youth during out of school time all year long. On behalf of all the members who attend the Clubs and their families, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to H.B. No. 7027 An Act Concerning The STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

I am compelled to testify to oppose the proposed reduction and consolidation of Neighborhood Youth Center funding into a pool of funds (Student Support Services) designed to serve far too divergent population groups and needs.

Boys & Girls Clubs in Connecticut serve children primarily between the ages of six to eighteen and focus on three priority outcome areas; academic success, healthy lifestyles and good character and citizenship. The overall goal for each member is to graduate from high school on time with a plan for the future. Boys & Girls Clubs are a great investment in young peoples' lives and produces an outstanding return for Connecticut. According to a study conducted by the Institute for Social Research and the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan commissioned by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, every \$1 invested in Boys & Girls Clubs returns \$8.07 in economic benefits for the individual and society. Connecticut benefits from this investment as we save on societal costs such as healthcare, public assistance and incarceration.

Boys & Girls Clubs provide safe enriching places for children to grow and learn. Parents who know their kids are in a safe and enriching afterschool environment are more likely to increase their earning power. In a study with the Department of Education of more than 6,600 Boys & Girls Club members in Connecticut, we found that our members were 60% less likely to be chronically absent from school when compared to students across the state.

Neighborhood Youth Center funding has provided resources to clubs to continue the vital work to develop great futures in our communities, in particular in geographical locations where having a great future is very much in doubt. Reducing the Neighborhood Youth Center Grant in half along with the After School Program, Family Resources Centers, Young Parent Program, Primary Mental Health and Adult Education and then asking us to compete for these dwindling resources will not produce the results this body desires for the children in our state. I ask that the Neighborhood Youth is fully funded as a separate grant for 1.2 million as funded in previous years. Thank you for the opportunity and your consideration on this matter.

